Glory Awaits: What Are You Waiting For?

Week 2: The Way of Glory

I. We're continuing in a series of messages we began last week called, Glory Awaits.

A. Leading up to Easter weekend we spent a lot of time looking at the cross and why the cross is central to the Christian faith. We talked about the history and the core beliefs surrounding the cross so if that's interesting to you and you weren't here for the series, you can find them on our website or on the Podcast.

B. But central to the Christian faith isn't just that Jesus, who was fully God and fully man, died as substitute for you and me, but that He also physically arose from the grave. In the gospel account of Luke chapter 24 Jesus described His death and resurrection in a way that often flies under the radar when we think of the significance of the resurrection, today, and here's what Jesus said:

Luke 24:25-27 (CSB) [Slide]: 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

1. The cross and resurrection were the doorway by which Jesus entered into His glory!
When our English Bibles use the word "glory" in the New Testament it comes from the Greek word "doxa." The New Testament was originally written in Greek, but the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the Hebrew word for "glory" also needs to be considered. The Hebrew word is "Khavod":

[Slide]: כָּבוֹד

a. The Hebrew idea of glory is "heaviness." The weight of God's glory in comparative terms would be like a penny getting crushed by a freight train! I'm not sure if kids do that anymore, but that was the thing to do when I was kid. The freight train in comparison to most things, especially a penny, demands a certain level of respect or authority. We said last week that Luke uses the word "doxa" or glory to describe the authority that was given to Jesus by way of His suffering. When we think about glory, we can conceptually grasp the idea of majesty or splendor. That's a proper way to think about glory, but there's also the Hebrew aspect of "heaviness" that reminds us that the crucified and resurrected Jesus is the Lord and the One who is authoritative! He gets the final say.

(1) I meant to get into this last week but ran out of time. When the word "authority" comes up today it typically isn't shed in a positive light. Maybe because we live in an era when it's not uncommon for people in authority to manipulate that authority for their own advantage. That's a shame when that happens. Even within the church this takes place and it's wrong.

(2) But there's another side that needs to be called out for what it is. We are a hyper individualistic culture that's given rise out of the American Dream idea. Personal rights and freedom can become an idol and we don't want to submit to authority out of arrogance or pride. When we take it to that extreme, it's a sin and heart issue. I make a lot of mistakes as a parent, but I do love my kids enough to teach them that there is God ordained authority in this world.

b. We have some misnomers about authority in our culture, so I wanted to address that.
But just to be clear, Jesus doesn't use His authority as a manipulation tool.
He guides us and disciplines us like a good parent would and here's how Jesus uses His authority:

Romans 8:34 (CSB) [Slide]: 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.

2. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. That's a position of authority and power but He doesn't use His authority for self-service. He uses His authority to intercede on behalf of you and me. He uses His position of glory, not to steamroll us like a freight train, but to advocate on our behalf.

3. But the goal of resurrection isn't for Jesus to come to our level but for us to be united with Him on His! Jesus brings us into new life. He doesn't join us in the old. He's done everything necessary to bridge the sin gap. We accept grace as a gift of God, and in an instant, we're brought from death to life. But we've been

given this treasure of salvation through the Spirit of God while still in our "clay jars" as the Apostle Paul says. That means we're no longer under the domain (or authority) of Satan, but we still possess our sin nature until we're in our eternal home.

C. Glory awaits us. Not because of what we bring to the table but because of who we are in Christ.
But the way of glory is many times a painful path. We want glory now! Me too. I hate (initially strong language) this, but it's true. I have this internal battle that wages constantly within that wants success and wants recognition. What am I waiting for? Exactly, what am I waiting for? Go after the glory now! I deserve it I say! Maybe you can relate? We easily get into this mindset of wanting Jesus to serve us not the other way around. Jesus is the One who has received all authority on heaven and earth and the path by which Jesus stepped into His authority was death and resurrection.
He's demonstrated the way of glory, but we're constantly kicking and screaming for another way, aren't we? There's a Latin term called:

[Slide]: Sub Contrario

1. My understanding of the term is that truth is often discovered in the opposite of what is perceived.
So much of our faith can be described by that term: the last becomes first, life is found in giving our lives away, glory through suffering, and I could go on. The way of glory has always been a painful path and even from the earliest days of Christianity, the Apostle Paul was challenging the early church not to buy into the lie of a Burger King philosophy of glory: my way, right away, at Burger King now.

2. God begins the process of preparing us for eternity the moment we accept Christ, but we want to latch onto the things of this world. It's a painful process, but glory awaits.
Not in and of ourselves, but in what we're waiting for, our eternal position in the presence of Christ.

..D. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 3:15-18 today as we look at the way of glory.
Because Jesus has stepped into His glory, He is authoritative, and He uses that authority to intercede on our behalf. We possess new life in Christ while at the same time He woos us to partake of it.
We have this treasure in clay jars though and the frailty of our flesh still has a craving for lust, pride, greed, and so on. Glory awaits but we don't like to wait. We want what we want now!
Here's how C.S. Lewis describes this inner battle:

> **[Slide]: Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.**

1. We focus so much on what we're being saved from that we neglect what we're being saved for.
As God loosens our grip on the things of this world, it can be a painful process, but it's all in preparation for the glory that awaits. That's what Paul is challenging the church of Corinth with and us as well.

2 Corinthians 3:15-18 (CSB) [Slide]: 15 Yet still today, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2. The 2nd letter that Paul writes to the Corinthian Church is an impassioned letter correcting the church on a dangerous path they were taking. They didn't want to wait for God's glory; they wanted glory now.
Paul founded the church in Corinth but had since moved on to plant other churches. In the time he was absent, false teachers had come in and claimed to be apostles. That was a bold claim because an apostle is someone who was directly commissioned from the resurrected Christ. Paul was an apostle born out of season and that seems to be something Paul battled for much of his ministry. He didn't ever battle the naysayers on their terms though. He always invited them to inspect the fruit!

a. Corinth was a wealthy city with lots of means and this was reflected within the church. These professed apostles claimed that charisma, success, wealth were signs that God was working. I know this was just a first century thing, right? Absolutely not! That's alive and well today.

It's not that God doesn't use people with charisma or financial means. The issue was that these false teachers were pawning off worldly success as the natural outcome of God's blessing. That's just not true. We have a core value that says:

[Slide]: We notice the unnoticeable

(1) Part of that is we want to step into the brokenness of the world with the hope of Christ, but it's not from a savior complex. The reality is that often what is unnoticeable in our world, and the very corners of the world we could easily right off, are the very areas where God is doing His most profound work! We want to join Him in this work! God's ways are often sub contrario!
Paul is challenging the Corinthian Church to not be deceived about the way of glory.
The Lord is glorified most clearly in our brokenness and weakness.

b. Paul begins this section of the letter in a confusing manner at first glance. As a whole, the Nation of Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah because He wasn't the Messiah they wanted Him to be. The early church was comprised of Jewish believers, Paul was a Jewish believer, so not entirely, but generally speaking they didn't want a suffering Messiah. The idea of suffering as a doorway to the glory of God remained veiled or hidden. Paul says it's only through a turning unto the Lord that the veil is removed. Turning is the idea of repentance. I acknowledge my error and I turn from one thing to another. As it relates to faith, I turn from my sin, and I turn to Jesus.

3. This entire passage is pulling from Exodus 34 when Moses's face would be radiant after meeting with God face to face. The glory of God would still be evident on Moses's face so he would have to cover his face when talking with the people. Paul is saying that repentance and turning to the Lord removes the veil. We have open communication with Almighty God through Jesus. The Spirit is within us and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. Our freedom refers to freedom from the entrapments and noise of this world. We are free to hear the Word of the Lord and respond! We can easily miss the primary reason the Spirit relates to our freedom. The Spirit of the Lord within us is the One who grants us the ability to hear and respond to the voice of the Lord!

4. In Christ, the veil has been removed and we are able to recognize the way of glory. We don't see the fullness of God's glory on this side of eternity. These frail bodies couldn't take it if we could!
But we see an accurate reflection of the fullness of God's glory in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
The Messiah who entered His glory through suffering.

5. Why does the way of glory correspond to the way of the cross?
I understand this isn't a feel-good message at first glance, but we know full well that the Christian life isn't one free of pain, suffering, or heartache. There's nowhere in Scripture where that promise is made anyway. But if you remember last week (or if this is your first time, I'll fill you in), glory is associated with the authority that Jesus has been granted. That means He always gets the final say.

6. Why would Paul describe our transformation process (not our salvation which isn't a process but an event) as being transformed from glory to glory?
Because only God can bring life out of death. He's molding us into the image of His Son that entered into His glory through suffering. In this broken world we'll experience pain. Some of it will be self-induced while other pain will be a part of the curse brought about by sin.
But the promise of God is that Jesus always gets the final say.

7. One day we will all physically die, and our soul will either be separated from God in hell or will be in the presence of God in heaven. But at the Second Coming our soul will be connected with our re-created body. Scripture says that for the Christ follower this is our glorified bodies capable of being in the presence of God's radiating glory! That's the glory that awaits!

E. But in the here and now life has a way of backing us against a wall. The authority of Jesus never fluctuates but when life is good, we tend to ignore it because we don't think we need it. We get a glimpse of the glory that awaits most clearly in those moments none of us like. Those moments when we don't have the answer or the resources to get us out of whatever pickle in which we find ourselves. It's in those seasons (and this isn't

typically an instantaneous conclusion, but one that develops over time), we see that Jesus always gets the final say. His glory prevails, even in death. New life can only come forth out of death.

1. Paul was pleading with the Corinthian Church because he loved them.

a. He saw them buying into a false notion of the gospel that glory somehow meant "your way, right away." The way of glory in God's economy is not the way we're conditioned to think about glory. We don't want to wait for anything!

b. The way of glory is sub contrario. God's kingdom is upside down from the kingdom of this world, so it makes sense that the way of glory wouldn't be through achievement, success, or proving we're amazing. And yet everything in us must fight against this.

c. But it's not a fight we white knuckle our way through. The Spirit is the Lord, and the Spirit is within us empowering us to hear the Word of the Lord and respond. We discover life when we surrender our lives and allow God to work in the brokenness and weakness of our lives to reveal the way of glory.

d. Life doesn't always make sense, heck maybe it rarely makes sense, but this one thing is for sure:
the glory of God is also the goodness of God and that mirror that's reflecting the glory and goodness of God is the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ!
God has demonstrated His glory and goodness in the most unfathomable of ways!
He's done this to prove that He always gets the final say. And Jesus is interceding fiercely for you!